

# THE OPEN COURT.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

*DEVOTED TO THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.*

No. 286. (VOL. VII.—7.)

CHICAGO, FEBRUARY 16, 1893.

Two Dollars per Year.  
Single Copies, 5 Cents.

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## THE MARRIAGE OF RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

BY CHARLES S. PEIRCE.

What is science? The dictionary will say that it is systematised knowledge. Dictionary definitions, however, are too apt to repose upon derivations; which is as much as to say that they neglect too much the later steps in the evolution of meanings. Mere knowledge, though it be systematised, may be a dead memory; while by science we all habitually mean a living and growing body of truth. We might even say that knowledge is not necessary to science. The astronomical researches of Ptolemy, though they are in great measure false, must be acknowledged by every modern mathematician who reads them, to be truly and genuinely scientific. That which constitutes science, then, is not so much correct conclusions, as it is a correct method. But the method of science is itself a scientific result. It did not spring out of the brain of a beginner: it was a historic attainment and a scientific achievement. So that not even this method ought to be regarded as essential to the beginnings of science. That which is essential, however, is the scientific spirit, which is determined not to rest satisfied with existing opinions, but to press on to the real truth of nature. To science once enthroned in this sense, among any people, science in every other sense is heir apparent.

And what is religion? In each individual it is a sort of sentiment, or obscure perception,—a deep recognition of a something in the circumambient All, which, if he strives to express it, will clothe itself in forms more or less extravagant, more or less accidental, but ever acknowledging the first and last, the *A* and *Ω*, as well as a relation to that Absolute of the individual's self, as a relative being. But religion cannot reside in its totality in a single individual. Like every species of reality, it is essentially a social, a public affair. It is the idea of a whole church, welding all its members together in one organic, systemic perception of the Glory of the Highest,—an idea having a growth from generation to generation and claiming a supremacy in the determination of all conduct, private and public.

Now, as science grows, it becomes more and more

perfect, considered as science; and no religionist can easily so narrow himself as to deny this. But as religion goes through the different stages of its history, it has, I fear we must confess, seldom been seen so vitalised as to become more and more perfect, even as judged from its own standpoint. Like a plucked flower, its destiny is to wilt and fade. The vital sentiment that gave it birth loses gradually its pristine purity and strength, till some new creed treads it down. Thus it happens quite naturally, that those who are animated with the spirit of science are for hurrying forward, while those who have the interests of religion at heart are apt to press back.

While this double change has been taking place, religion has found herself compelled to define her position; and in doing so, has inevitably committed herself to sundry propositions, which, one by one, have been, first questioned, then assailed, and finally overthrown by advancing science. Seeing such a chasm open before her feet, religion has at first violently recoiled, and at last has leapt it; satisfying herself as best she might with an altered creed. In most cases the leap has not seemed to hurt her; yet internal injuries may have been sustained. Who can doubt that the church really did suffer from the discovery of the Copernican system, although infallibility, by a narrow loophole, managed to escape? In this way, science and religion become forced into hostile attitudes. Science, to specialists, may seem to have little or nothing to say that directly concerns religion; but it certainly encourages a philosophy which, if in no other respect, is at any rate opposed to the prevalent tendency of religion, in being animated by a progressive spirit. There arises, too, a tendency to pooh-pooh at things unseen.

It would be ridiculous to ask to whose fault this situation is chargeable. You cannot lay blame upon elemental forces. Religion, from the nature of things, refuses to go through her successive transformations with sufficient celerity to keep always in accord with the convictions of scientific philosophy. The day has come, however, when the man whom religious experience most devoutly moves can recognise the state of the case. While adhering to the essence of religion,

and so far as possible to the church, which is all but essential, say, penessential, to it, he will cast aside that religious timidity, that is forever prompting the church to recoil from the paths into which the Governor of history is leading the minds of men, a cowardice that has stood through the ages as the landmark and limit of her little faith; and will gladly go forward, sure that truth is not split into two warring doctrines, and that any change that knowledge can work in his faith can only affect its expression, but not the deep mystery expressed.

Such a state of mind may properly be called a religion of science. Not that it is a religion to which science or the scientific spirit has itself given birth; for religion, in the proper sense of the term, can arise from nothing but the religious sensibility. But it is a religion, so true to itself, that it becomes animated by the scientific spirit, confident that all the conquests of science will be triumphs of its own, and accepting all the results of science, as scientific men themselves accept them, as steps toward the truth, which may appear for a time to be in conflict with other truths, but which in such cases merely await adjustments which time is sure to effect. This attitude, be it observed, is one which religion will assume not at the dictate of science, still less by way of a compromise, but simply and solely out of a bolder confidence in herself and in her own destiny.

Meantime, science goes unswervingly its own gait. What is to be its goal is precisely what it must not seek to determine for itself, but let itself be guided by nature's strong hand. Teleological considerations, that is to say ideals, must be left to religion; science can allow itself to be swayed only by efficient causes; and philosophy, in her character of queen of the sciences, must not care, or must not seem to care, whether her conclusions be wholesome or dangerous.

#### RELIGION INSEPARABLE FROM SCIENCE.

THERE is no limb or organ of the human body which is entirely separated from the rest or leads an independent existence; and in the same way, there is not one action or operation or domain of operations in man's being which can be regarded as disconnected from his other activities: for man's entire activity constitutes one interconnected whole. Thus, when we speak of science and religion, of art or of ethics we create certain artificial boundaries more or less definitely determined, but which do not constitute separate domains.

Science may briefly be characterised as the search for truth, and religion as a certain conviction regulating our conduct. Now whenever the result of thought or inquiry is of such a nature as to be a conviction which

serves as a norm of our moral life, a scientific idea has become a religious ideal.

Says Professor Peirce:

"Teleological considerations, that is to say ideals, must be left to religion; science can allow itself to be swayed only by efficient causes; and philosophy, in her character of queen of the sciences, must not care, or must not seem to care, whether her conclusions be wholesome or dangerous."

Certainly, when we search for truth we must not approach a problem with a foredetermined conclusion. Scientists and philosophers must make their inquiries without any anxiety about the conclusions to which their results will lead. In this way alone truth will be found. But to say that "teleological considerations," that is to say, ideals "must be left to religion" is in so far incorrect as we cannot dispense with science as a critic of our ideals. We cannot by mere religious sentiment determine whether or not an ideal is truly feasible, practical, and advisable. There are some ideals so-called which closely considered are mere dreams or mirages, and to pursue such will-o'-the-wisps would not only be a loss of time but might even lead us into danger. If there is anything that must be subjected to the most rigorous critique of an unbiased inquiry into truth, it is our teleological considerations. If our purposes, plans, and ends are not in concord with the real state of things, we shall soon find our position to be very difficult. And this is true not only of our business enterprises when we attend to affairs which seem to concern merely ourselves and our own well-being, but also and even more so of our religious convictions which serve us as guides for the regulation of our moral relations to our fellow beings and to mankind in general, including the future of the human race.

We can nowhere, neither in practical life nor in our religious sentiments and convictions, dispense with a rational inquiry into truth; that is to say, religion is inseparable from science.

P. C.

#### THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL IN LITERATURE.

BY CHARLOTTE PORTER.

AN important discovery has been made within this century by writers of history. The discovery consists in the recognition that the "personal adventures of kings and nobles, the pomp of courts and intrigues of favorites," "drum and trumpet history" in short, is not so vital a subject for investigation and record as the manifold quiet, common incidents of that "constitutional, intellectual, and social advance in which we read the history of the nation itself."

A corresponding discovery awaits recognition in literature. In the coming of the people to their own in literature, as in government, consists the real eventfulness of the time. If literature is to deal with this it must paint it in the imaginative glow that belongs



to it as truly as it ever belonged to knightly adventures and mediæval coils, or to edifying specimens of aristocratic sighs and smiles. In the day when feudal ideals, or aspirations of the *noblesse*, and proprieties of the *bourgeoisie* were timely, literature shaped itself to fit and to lead the best impulses of the people. These old-time ideals are not dead while they live in their appropriate literature and body forth the impress of man's growth: but if they are to be echoed forever in modern books, present-time ideals will become as dead, and current literature will be able to tell the future of nothing but its clever pedantry. If literary advance is still to be an intimate and necessary part of life, then the annalist of the inner experiences, the emotions and desires of the race, must follow the historian along the path that leads away from the throne and up and down among men of all sorts and conditions. To trace the beginning and development of the new power of the commonalty in the intellectual life will be more to the point than to furbish up representations of literary art in affected imitation of methods grown archaic.

Writers have not been lacking who have felt the stirring of the new impulse and sought to show it forth, but they have lacked public comprehension of their purpose and appreciation of their bold new art. For almost no critics have yet contemplated a method of criticism that would take account of new literary phenomena. At each original work they are staggered. They look at each other and shake their academic curls and sneer. They can measure any new phenomenon only by rods cut the length of certain safe old patterns, and if any one venture to say: "But these measures do not fit," they howl against the impious impudence that claims superiority over classic standards, regardless of the fact that the true contention is not for superiority, but for difference and adaptation to the time. And so, in an age when the critic, such as he is, is omnipresent, intervening everywhere between authors and readers, and when, therefore, he might hold a more useful office than ever before, his increased influence is turned against literary progress instead of towards it. Does any one know of any long-established periodical in this country which does not throw its weight backwards instead of forwards? Mr. Howells, indeed, has ventured to doubt the present propriety of antique literary canons; he has lifted up a single voice, gainsaid by other pages of the magazine he served, and a flood of malevolent personalities has come down upon him in lieu of counter-argument.

Our need is not only a literature true to the Present, however enriched by the Past, for we have had signs of that, here and there, in condemned pioneer writers, who yet have made their way against the pricks; we need, also, a new criticism that will recog-

nise the fact and the good of evolution both in literary subject-matter and in literary art. If hesitating critics with scholarly prejudices lack originality enough to find the right criterion for new literary portents or cannot relate these new portents rightly and without contradiction to the Past that bred the Present and all its witty inventions, then a new race of critics must arise who can. As old history must have new historians and new methods when the centres of civil life shift, so the old literature, with the new that has grown out of it, must have new critics and new *criteria* when it is evident that the corresponding centres of literary life also have shifted. For the existence of a new ideal is, virtually, a new fact. Towards it civilisation tends, no matter under what obstacles it pursues its way, no matter in how few heads the dream dwells, or how crazy most heads think those few heads are. It implies, necessarily, the formation of a new literature. Former methods in authorship and in literary criticism were of a piece with the government and manners of a lapsing society. Exclusiveness was their distinguishing mark. Inclusiveness, on the other hand,—inclusiveness for the sake of thorough knowledge, complete experience, and the fit and timely freshly energised ideal—must be the beacon of the democratic movement in literature and in literary criticism.

When the new ideal of cosmopolitan or democratic brotherhood is accepted, every original phase of art, whether in subject-matter or workmanship, will have a right to receive due consideration as such; and every nation will have a claim to let its poets and expressers contribute their share to the commonwealth of literary life and world-experience. A criticism of literature which shall be a criticism of the life in literature is in prospect from this mount of observation. Within the limits of the old, aristocratic, narrowly patriotic system, on the other hand, the critic's eye is shut, and the mouth of him open only to eulogy of picked men and properly selected subjects and to the exact labelling of styles according to set standards. All talents outside the line must be ignored as barbarous, or patronised as foreign; and philological study of the classics may be indulged, in order to stick a feather in the cap of the specialist, to which end, also, there may be an endless threshing of the old straw of texts, technicalities and antiquarianism, but all quite bare of vital relation to the present wants of a democratic world.

So, also, it is in literature itself, in creative literature, that is, considered apart from criticism: if the new ideal of the separate worth and development of each individual integer of the social sum-total be accepted, then new literary territory must be added to the old domain of art. Everybody has a right to be found, or to be made, interesting in a democratic era. But the "process of the suns" towards this equality has been

long. Literature tells the tale of growth towards it even more clearly than history, for it shows not questionable facts alone, but that which is more trustworthy—the state of thought. In a drama of the first rank, in India, only gods could be the *dramatis personæ* and only mythological tales could constitute the plot. Demigods and mortal heroes of war and conquest were admissible in stories of a lower order. The play in which the common people were introduced belonged in the lowest grade. In early European literature the conquering hero, son of the gods, or miraculously befriended by them, was the master-theme of the minstrelsy which ministered to his social pre-eminence. The unreality and wonder of the interplay in poesy of gods with heroes magnified the deed the bard celebrated in the interest of his liege lord, and set it aloof from the every-day life of the unchronicled and unprivileged classes. Not only the spaciousness and perspective of the Greek theatre made the mask and the cothurnus requisites of the stage; the conventional notions of beauty they subserved helped, also, to conserve the old order, civil, religious, and literary. It was undermined by such touches of realism, such allusions to matters of common experience—to every-day talk and manners—as that dangerous fellow Euripides introduced in his versions of time-honored myths. The revolutionary moral and social ideals that lay at the root of Euripides's innovations were buried in the Roman conquest and the darkness of the Middle Ages. They emerged again, strangely enough, in the popular approach English literature made in Shakespeare towards the literary artist's command of the real. Mixed though this splendid popular art was with real and mock euphuism and with other aristocratic literary freaks and class obeisances, its distinction above the other work of the time lay in the breadth of its realism. Yet this humanisation of art got no further by way of the stage in England. The Latin supremacy that entered by way of the universities stifled originality and freshness. The Shakespearean heir-apparent, prophesying anew of the "marvels of the real," was born at last in the novels of Dickens and George Eliot. Fresh ranges of subject-matter, new modes of treatment congenial with modern ways of living and thinking are the tokens of this new-old power of humanised art.

In the golden days of caste, demi-gods and courtly heroes wore the crown the story-teller weaves. Now, various sorts and conditions of men may make up the body of subject-matter, literary and poetic, as they make up the body politic. Under the prevailing theory of civil society no one is privileged to receive consideration as a theme of art merely on the score of superficial attributes—"£1,000 a year and good gifts." The creative attention of the artist cannot be refused

to one whose condition is altogether unblessed externally. Inquiry must go deeper, below surfaces, whether promising or unpromising. So, indeed, has it always penetrated in the best creative literature of every period. But deeper yet must be the literary insight, and more freshly constructive the literary art which shall use the time and sift it with the energy derived from it. Nothing may be scorned, nothing may be accepted, all must be proved, all

"Virtues, methods, mights,  
Means, appliances, delights.  
Reputed wrongs and braggart rights,  
Smug routine and things allowed;  
Minorities, things under cloud."

Artists and critics alike may understand that the new literary task will need their utmost force and fire. For it requires not less but more imagination and spiritual control to portray and put in vivid action the genuine regal power of the commoner undistinguished by the conventional badges of kingship; and it takes not less but more culture and critical acumen to perceive and enjoy the uncrowned good in contemporaneous tendencies.

#### THE FINAL CATASTROPHE.

BY MARY PROCTOR.

IF THOSE theories be sound, according to which each planet during its extreme youth is as a sun, glowing with fervent heat, and in extreme old age is like our moon, cold, (save where the sun's rays pour upon it,) even to its very centre, we should regard the various portions of the middle age of a planet as indicating more or less of vitality, according as the signs of internal heat and activity are greater or less. Assuredly, thus viewing our earth, we have no reason to accept the melancholy doctrine that she is as yet near the stage of planetary decrepitude. She still shows signs of intense vitality, not, indeed, that all parts of her surface are moved at the present time by what Humboldt called "the reaction of her interior." In this respect, doubtless, changes slowly take place, the region of disturbance at one time, becoming after many centuries a region of rest, and *vice versa*. But regarding the earth as a whole, we have every reason for believing that she has still abundant life in her. The astronomer who should perceive, even with the aid of the most powerful telescope, the signs of change in another planet, (for instance, Mars, our nearest neighbor among the superior planets,) the progress of the change being actually discernible as he watched, would certainly conclude that our planet was moved by mighty internal forces. While mountain ranges are being upheaved, or valleys depressed, race after race are living out their life on earth, and underground subterranean forces are still engaged upon their great work. Mountain ranges are being raised to a differ-



ent level, old shore-lines shift their places, table-lands are being formed, great valleys are being scooped out, whilst the sea advances in one place and recedes in another. Nature's plastic hand is still modelling and remodelling the earth, making it ever a fit abode for man.

In an article on "Great Earthquakes," written by my father in the year 1885, he remarked as follows :

"We have had such remarkable evidence during the last ten or twelve years of the energy of the earth's internal forces, that many are asking whether the earth's vitality has not of late been increasing rather than dying out, as had been supposed, or rather whether her normal vitality has not for a while changed into feverish disturbance. If we consider, however, the real nature of the processes which are going on in the earth's interior, (so far as the evidence enables us to judge,) we shall see that while on the one hand there is no reason to expect any recognisable loss of energy in periods so short as a few thousands of years, there is, on the other, no reason to fear any great accession of subterranean activity. In former times, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes were attributed to internal fires, generating from time to time great volumes of gas and vapor, (steam, in particular, was recognised as a potent disturbing factor,) by which, at length, the resistance of the crust was overcome, and an outlet of escape found for the imprisoned gaseous and molten matter, the crust rending as the outburst was effected. While we still recognise internal heat as the immediate cause of subterranean movements, we recognise as the cause of this heat the energy pervading the earth's mass. It is the earth's attractive energy, steadily acting upon her crust, which generates the heat by which that crust is disturbed. 'By virtue of this force, [as he pointed out in a number of *The Contemporary Review*, published during the year 1884,] the crust of the earth is continually undergoing changes, as the loss of heat and consequent contraction, or chemical changes beneath the surface, leave room for the movement inward of the rock-substances of the crust, with crushing, grinding action, accompanied by the generation of intense heat.' Thus, so long as the force of gravity continues to have matter to act upon efficiently, the earth's vitality will continue. The force of gravity itself will last forever, we may be well assured, but as the matter of the earth's crust is steadily drawn inward, terrestrial gravity will have less and less work of contraction to do, and the earth will show less and less of that kind of vitality which is shown by earth-throes. But the amount of contraction taking place in a year, or in a life-time, or even in the life-time of a nation or a race, is so small that it might be regarded almost as nothing. The earth's vitality is apparently the same now as it was a thousand years ago, and as it will be a thousand years hence."

Earthquakes and volcanic disturbances are the outward and visible signs of the inexhaustible vitality within the earth's crust. For several centuries Vesuvius was at rest before the great outburst nearly two thousand years ago, when the crater, supposed to have been extinct, suddenly sprang into new life, and since then it has sometimes been at rest for more than a century, and at other times in active eruption many times in twenty years. During the years 1883 and 1884 foolish prophecies were promulgated, respecting the perihelion passage of the giant planets, the internal passages of the great pyramids, and other such absurdities. But there have been far worse years than

1883 and 1884. Consider the year 1784 for example. The Grimms of those days, (for these gloomy prophets are always with us,) pointed out that surely now at last their predictions of the world's coming end were about to come true—after a few thousands of years of failure. Not to mention an extraordinary number of minor earthquakes, six thousand lives were lost in a single shock in Armenia, and in Iceland a volcano flung forth from fifty to sixty millions of cubic yards of lava and scoriæ. Not only was there a widespread destruction throughout the south-east parts of Iceland, but the very depths of the sea were invaded. Flames broke forth through the sea-waves, and the sea was covered with pumice for more than a hundred miles from the shore. Iceland was covered by a thick canopy of ashes for a year, and atmospheric currents carried the ashes over Europe, Asia, and America. "The very sun was darkened, and showed only as a ball of fire," says Gilbert White, of Selborne, "while, throughout the year, frightful hurricanes and tremendous thunderstorms prevailed in such sort, that many believed the world was coming to an end."

Yet a century has passed, and the world still rolls on undestroyed.

In an article read at the Academy of Sciences, at Paris, on January 30th, 1870, by M. St. Meunier, reference was made to the time when the air and ocean must pass away, when all living creatures on the earth must perish, and how the final desolation of the earth shall come about.

"At present, the interior of our planet is described as a molten fluid, with a solid crust outside. As the world cools down with age this crust will thicken and crack, and crack again as the lower part contracts. This will form long, narrow chasms of vast depth, which, like those of the moon, will traverse without deviation the mountains, valleys, plains, and ocean-beds; the waters will fall into these, and, after violent catastrophes arising from their boiling by contact with the hot interior, they will finally disappear from the surface and become absorbed in the pores of the vastly thickened earth-crust, and in the caverns, cracks, and chasms, which the rending contraction will open in the interior. These cavities will continue to increase, will become of huge magnitude, when the outside crust grows thick enough to form its own supporting arch, for then the fused interior will recede and form mighty chasms, that will engulf not merely the waters, but all the atmosphere likewise."

At this stage the earth will be a middle-aged world like our moon; but as old age advances, the contraction of the fluid beneath the outside solid crust will continue, the rainures will increase in length, depth, and width, as M. St. Meunier maintains they are now growing on the moon. This must continue till the centre solidifies, and then these cracks will reach the centre, and the world will be split through in fragments, corresponding to the different rainures. Thus we shall have a planet composed of several solid fragments, held together only by their mutual attractions.

but the rotatory movement of these will, according to the French philosopher, become unequal, as the fragments present different densities and are situated at unequal distances from the centre. Some will be accelerated, others retarded, and others again will rub against each other and grind away those portions which have the weakest cohesion. The fragments thus worn off will, "at the end of sufficient time, girdle with a complete ring the central star."

At this stage the fragments become real meteors, and then perform all the meteoric functions, excepting the seed-carrying theory of Sir W. Thomson; "the hypothesis, that life originated on the earth through moss grown fragments of another world."

Sir W. Thomson has calculated "that the earth must have solidified at some time a hundred millions or two hundred millions of years ago; and there we arrive at the beginning of the present state of things, the process of cooling the earth, which is going on now. Before that time it was cooling as a liquid, and in passing from the liquid to the solid state, there was a catastrophe which introduced a new state of cooling. So that by means of that law we come to a time when the earth began to assume its present state. We do not find the time of the commencement of the universe, but simply of the present structure of the earth.

If we went further back we might make more calculations and find how long the earth had been in a liquid state. We should come to another catastrophe, and say at that time, not that the universe began to exist, but that the present earth passed from the gaseous to the liquid state. And if we went still farther back, we should probably find the earth falling together out of a great ring of matter surrounding the sun and distributed over its orbit. The same thing is true of every body of matter if we trace its history, for we come to a certain time at which a catastrophe took place; and if we were to trace back the history of all the bodies of the universe in that way, we should continually see them separating up into small parts. What they have actually done is to fall together and get solid.

If we could reverse the process, we should see them separating and getting fluid; and, as a limit to that, at an indefinite distance in past time we should find that all these bodies would be resolved into molecules, and all these would be flying away from each other. There would be no limit to that process, and we could trace it back as far as ever we liked to trace it. So that on the assumption (a very large assumption) that the present constitution of the laws of geometry and mechanics has held good during the whole of the past time, we should be led to the conclusion that at an inconceivably long time ago the universe did consist of ultimate molecules all separate from one another and approaching one another. Then they would meet to-

gether and form a great number of small hot bodies, and there would be the process of cooling going on in those bodies exactly as we find it now.

But we have no evidence of such a catastrophe as implies a beginning of the laws of nature. We do not come to something of which we cannot make any further calculation. We find that however far we may like to go back, we approximate to a certain state of things, but never actually get to them. Thus we have a probability, about as great as science can make it, of the beginning of the present state of things on the earth and the fitness of the earth for habitation.

According to Professor Clifford:

"We know with great probability of the beginning of the habitation of the earth about one hundred or two hundred millions of years back, but that of the beginning of the universe we know nothing at all."

Now, with regard to the final catastrophe, we know that existence upon our earth depends upon the heat given by the sun. The process of cooling is going on in the sun, as the process of cooling is going on on our earth. When the heat of the sun is exhausted, we shall be frozen. On the other hand, if we consider the tide which the earth makes upon the sun, instead of being a great wave lifting the mass of the sun up directly under the earth, it is carried forward by the sun's rotation; the result is that the earth, instead of being attracted to the sun's centre, is attracted to a point before the centre. The immediate tendency is to accelerate the earth's motion, and the final effect of this upon the planet is to make its orbit larger. That planet disturbing all the other planets, the consequence is, that we have the earth gradually going away from the sun, instead of falling into it. In any case, all that we know is that the sun is going out. If we fall into the sun we shall be scorched; if the sun goes out, or we get further away from it, we shall be frozen. So far as the earth is concerned, we have no means of determining what will be the character of the end, but we know that one of these two things must take place.

An end of life upon the earth is as probable as science can make it, but in regard to the universe we have no right to form any conclusion at all. Long after the earth shall have ceased to be the abode of life, other and nobler orbs will become in their time fit to support millions of forms, as well of animal as of vegetable existence; and the later each planet is in thus putting on life, the longer will be the duration of the life-supporting era of its own existence. Every orb may in turn become the scene of busy life, and after its due life-season become inert and dead. We see, in imagination, change after change, cycle after cycle, till:

"Drawn on paths of never-ending duty,  
The world's eternity begun;  
Rest absorbed in ever-glorious beauty  
On the heart of the All-Central Sun."



## CURRENT TOPICS.

THE death of a party chieftain is a political advantage which his old followers like to improve. In that hour of amnesty when his enemies must be silent his friends can speak. In the shadow of the pall we have a right to speak well of the dead, and if we expand the funeral privilege so as to say a little evil of the living, we may properly do so in vindication of the "time honored" party on the one hand, or the "grand old" party on the other. The funeral orations lately delivered on eminent Republicans have been tender as Minie bullets to the opposite party. Like Falstaff's men, the Democrats have been "well peppered"; and the best of it was, that under the laws of magnanimity they could not fire back. I contend that no funeral praise is too extravagant for a dead statesman who for years was the leader of my own party; and when I hear that in eloquence, diplomacy, and all political wisdom, he was a combination of Bismarck and Gladstone, I approve the flattery, and add a few superlative qualities which I pretend were lacking in the German and the Englishman. When a very eloquent eulogist at the solemnities appointed by the Union League Club says that the departed leader had "the courage of a Patrick Henry, the originality and the creative genius of an Alexander Hamilton, the logic and comprehension of a Daniel Webster, the magnetism and the eloquence of a Clay," I applaud the tribute, for the orator is bravely doing his duty. He is appointed to say nothing but good of the dead, and as much good as it is possible to say. At the same time, party loyalty requires him to "improve the occasion," to assail his political opponents, and challenge controversy at the grave. Otherwise there is no political profit in a great man's death. Even Julius Cæsar, "foremost man of all this world," does no good by dying, unless Mark Antony can make a little "party capital" at the funeral.

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In its own way, the funeral oration delivered at the Union League Club in honor of Mr. Blaine, was as politically ingenious as that made by Mark Antony at the funeral of Cæsar. Cutting off reply by warning the other side that "there is no partisanship in the mourning of American patriotism," the orator applied the sentiment in the following non-partisan way. He described those who had opposed the aims and policies of his departed friend as "detractors who may have to shield their own eyes with the smoked glass of party prejudice to find the spots that may exist on the full orb of his splendid and undying fame"; and he attributed their opposition to "unthinking ignorance, or the envy and jealousy of ambitious mediocrity." This funeral oration may not have been magnanimous, but it was as sound in party doctrine as anything we can get, even in the excitement of a political campaign. Just after the surrender of Lee and Johnstone, a general in the National Army had command in one of the cities of the South, and some of the returned confederates, assisted by the citizens, made themselves rather disagreeable, so that he issued an order forbidding certain manifestations which he thought were disrespectful to his flag. A committee of the offenders complaining of the order as harsh and tyrannical, reminded the general that magnanimity was due from the victors to the vanquished; and his answer was, "magnanimity is due also from the vanquished to the victors." They accepted the rebuke, and confessed that they had never thought of that. So it ought to be at the funeral of a great political chieftain. The orator of the occasion speaks under a flag of truce which he should be careful to respect. At such a funeral there ought to be magnanimity on both sides.

\* \* \*

There seems to be a painful calm just now in our "aggressive" politics, due to a suspicion that the scheme of the Hawaiian revolution is not so much to annex the Sandwich Islands to the United States, as to annex the United States to the Sandwich Islands. This gives the subject a different appearance, and General Jingo

Filibustero is not mixing so much gunpowder with his whiskey as he was a week ago. There is an opinion growing among our statesmen that the project of annexation is not yet ripe, and that we had better wait until the Islands drop into our lap like apples out of a tree. This picturesque figure is borrowed from the *Philadelphia Times*, which, jealous for international justice, declares that "we must defend those people from foreign aggression and see that no other power shall interfere with their independence. The apple will fall into our lap when it is ripe, and we do not want it prematurely." There is hardly anything so disinterested as that in the annals of political morality. No "aggressions" but our own must be allowed; and "no other power" but ourselves must "interfere with their independence." The *Philadelphia Press* appears to think that the Islands are worth stealing, not only for their own value, but also for the sake of practice, as it were. "It will familiarise the public mind," says the *Press*, "with the acquisition of other territory which must be contemplated in the near future"; and the *Philadelphia Ledger*, rural and innocent as a confidence man asking what o'clock it is, says, "The first impulse of nearly all Americans is to oppose annexation, this country being singularly free from any desire to extend its dominions; but there is a possibility at least that annexation of Hawaii, Cuba, Canada, and Mexico may become necessary some day." Why people should go to comic books for humor when they can get it every day in editorial moralising, is marvellous to me. We propose to take Hawaii, Cuba, Canada, and Mexico "some day," but in the meantime the world must understand that we are "singularly free from any desire to extend our dominions." And those are the sentiments of the Quaker city founded by William Penn, who never would take any territory from the aborigines, without giving them some glass beads for it, or something.

\* \* \*

The strike of the preachers at Columbus threatens a spiritual scarcity, and still farther complicates the labor question. The legislature of Ohio has been in the reprehensible habit of using non-union religion, and even getting it for nothing; a practice which has brought forth a protest and the promise of a boycott from the Pastors' Union. At a meeting of the Union held last Monday, it was determined that spiritual grace be withheld from the legislature unless paid for at regular union rates. A feeble show of resistance was made by the Rev. Mr. Patt of the First Baptist church, who thought it "would be too bad to deprive the legislators of all spiritual advice without warning"; but the majority thought it would be serving them just right, and so the resolution was unanimously adopted, after an eloquent speech by the Rev. W. C. Holiday of the Mount Vernon Avenue Methodist church, who declared with proper indignation that he had "long ago resolved that he would make no prayers in the General Assembly without remuneration." It is thought that the strikers will win, that the legislature will surrender, that non-union prayers will be discontinued, and that hereafter all prayers offered in the General Assembly of Ohio will bear the blue label of the Pastors' Union. I think the Union is right, because if the Ohio legislature is worth praying for, the prayers are worth paying for; but, on the other hand, if the honorable members are past praying for, there is no use in wasting money for prayers. Thirty-five years ago, when I was member for Marbletown, every preacher at the capital acted as chaplain in his turn, so that we got every variety of spiritual grace that could be had for cash. The Union rate at that time was three dollars a prayer, which we cheerfully paid,—out of other people's money,—drawing the line, of course, at Universalists and Unitarians, whose prayers were under a boycott of the Pastors' Union, and therefore worth nothing.

\* \* \*

The prayer question seems to be making some discord among the Directors of the World's Fair. It appears that the executive

committee has voted \$5,000 for the opening ceremonies, and has omitted from the programme both poetry and prayer. At first it was thought that the omission was merely an oversight, but it seems not, for the committee, on cross-examination, confessed that it was intentional and deliberate. The Pastors' Union refuses to accept the insufficient excuse that the dedication ceremonies in October had prayers enough in them to last the Exposition all through the sickly season and far away into the fall. The Union maintains, and with reason, that the whole Board of Directors and all the field and staff will need a great deal of praying for about the first of May, and from that time on to the end of the Exposition. I have no doubt that the pastors will win in this contest, for if they are not allowed to pray for the Exposition, they may pray against it and ruin it altogether. Besides, they may appeal for help to Congress, because if that highly religious assembly has the right to make a law closing the Exposition on Sunday, it certainly has the right to command that it be opened with prayer on Monday. The Poets' Union has not yet been heard from, and there will probably be no protest made against cutting out the "ode." I hope not, for among all the minor torments of this life there is hardly one so able as an "ode" to create "that tired feeling" in the human soul.

\* \* \*

In the *Indianapolis Journal* I find the following appeal, which I present as a very creditable specimen of what I call oblique impeachment, a charge in the form of a question, or a puzzle to be solved:

"The country would like to know just how much truth there is in the rumor that President-elect Cleveland held a large block of stock in the Whiskey Trust and got caught in the recent slump in prices. If he is in a position to make a positive and explicit denial of the statement he cannot do it too soon."

It is to be hoped that Mr. Cleveland will immediately explain this matter, either by going to Indianapolis, or by letter to the *Journal*, if that organ will kindly excuse him from personal attendance. The editor of the *Journal*, as the censor of public morals and public men, is merely performing a melancholy duty. He would not insinuate anything; he is merely speaking for the country. It is the country that would "like to know," you know. As soon as Mr. Cleveland has answered that conundrum, the *Journal* will want to know how much truth there is in the rumor that the President-Elect formerly served as a pirate under Captain Kidd. The comical audacity of this mode of political warfare puts me in mind of a joint debate which I once heard in Iowa, between two rival candidates for Congress, where one of them thus addressed the other, who happened to be editor of a newspaper: "What I want to ask my honorable friend is this: How did he get the money to start his newspaper? Did he or did he not live in Ogle county, Illinois? Did he or did he not insure his father's life for five thousand dollars? Did he or did he not murder his father, draw the money, come to Iowa, and start a newspaper with his ill-gotten gains? Let him answer those questions if he is in a position to do so."

\* \* \*

I acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of an invitation to the "first meeting of the American Psychical Society." I hope to attend, so that I may get some revelations of, by, or from a disembodied soul; some sign of immortality visible to the mortal eye, palpable to the sight as the ghost of Hamlet's father, and able to talk like that uneasy spirit; able to tell of deeds done that I knew not of, and of deeds that shall be done. For this evidence I have hitherto sought in vain, or found it only in unreliable dreams, when my reason, sleeping on duty like a drowsy sentinel, left me defenceless. I am sceptical of all psychical phenomena, but not irreverent, for I am not vain enough to doubt that there are minds more purified from earthly dross than mine; minds able to see spiritual realities invisible to me, and to hear warnings and prophecies that

my faculties are not refined enough to hear. I may not believe it, and yet it may be true that just men have "walked with God."

\* \* \*

Mr. James Payn, in his delightful "Note Book," on the first page of the *Illustrated London News* for December 24th, sprinkles a little sarcasm on the Psychical Society of England, and reproaches the society, because Mr. Dickens failed in all his experiments with psychic science. Mr. Payn says: "Charles Dickens, though disposed to give things a fair trial, had in his later years very little patience with the haunted-house theory. At one time, whenever he heard of such a dwelling, he used to obtain permission, with his friend Mr. W. H. Mills, to pass a night in it,—some of his experiences were published in one of his Christmas numbers,—and they turned out to be unmitigated frauds." He means that the haunted houses and the ghosts, not the experiences, were "unmitigated frauds"; and in either case his language is too harsh; and besides it was based on a mistake, as appears from a letter printed by Mr. Payn in the "Note Book" for January 7th. That letter was written to him by Mr. Charles Dickens the younger, who says: "You are not quite accurate in the 'Note Book' as to my father and the haunted houses. He never obtained permission to pass a night in one. He tried to do so often enough, but the difficulty was that no haunted house could ever be found. The most promising stories melted into thin air on close examination. There was a party always ready to investigate any phenomena anywhere: it consisted of my father, W. H. Wills, Edmund Yates, myself, and the two big dogs who lived in the stable-yard at Gad's Hill. But no employment was ever found for us." No wonder. The reason for the failure is plain enough, and I submit that Mr. Dickens did not give the ghosts a "fair trial." He ought to have gone alone. No prudent ghost is likely to expose himself, even in a haunted house, to the criticism of four vigorous men and "two big dogs who live in a stable-yard."

M. M. TRUMBULL.

## THE OPEN COURT.

NIXON BUILDING, 175 LA SALLE ST.,

*CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, Post Office Drawer F.*

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DR. PAUL CARUS, EDITOR.

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